

Anthony Butler to Andrew Jackson, October 28, 1833, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

COLONEL ANTHONY BUTLER TO JACKSON.

private and Confidential

Mexico City, October 28, 1833.

My dear Sir, I have just had a very singular conversation with a Mexican, and as it was on a subject that you have much at heart I set down to detail it to you, in hopes that my letter will be in time for the next New York packet. I preface my narration by saying that the Gentleman I allude to is one of the most shrewd and intelligent men in the Country, holds at the present time a high official station, and has much influence with the Presidt. Genl. St. Anna.

The conversation commenced by his enquiring whether I had abandoned the question about boundary. I replied that after the last note reed from the Secy of State on that subject, it seemed to me to be closed. He observed, you are mistaken—it is not closed, but perhaps it is best that you did not at that time press it further; and added; on Sunday next Gen. St. Anna will be here, and we shall then be relieved from the ignorant vagaries of the Vice President. And after a pause and some hesitation, he observed, There is one Man who must be brought over to us in this affair, without whom we can do nothing, with him on our side, every thing. And enquired have you command of Money? I (recollecting that you had authorised me to employ the amount designed for this object in any way which according to my discretion was best calculated to effect our purpose) replied to his question, Yes, I have money. He went on. There will be a large sum necessary, ½ a

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million or upwards. this Man so important for us to gain must have himself 200, or 300 thousand dollars, there are others amongst whom it may become necessary to distribute 3 or 4 Hundred thousand more. Can you command that Sum? I replied assure me of the object, and the money shall not fail. It is very well said he, in a few days we shall converse on this subject again—that is so soon as we get over the ferment of the triumphal entry of the President, and settle down into business habits.

You will doubtless consider this a most strange and remarkable conversation, and not the least remarkable feature in it, is the very *direct* and *frank manner* in which a question of such a character was treated—as if indeed it had been a mere question of contract between individuals for a part of their property: and it developes at once the Character of these people, selfish, corrupt, utterly unprincipled. Any of them may be successfully appealed to through their Cupidity. Well as I know them, I confess, that the interview and Conversation just described went farther than my expectations or hopes would have warranted; but I now believe the prospect once more a fair one, and although not perhaps reduced as yet to so much certainty as I had it with Mr. Alaman, still it is evidently once more within the reach of an effort. You will be at no loss to imagine who the important Individual was, which he considered it *all important* to *gain over* . I had him as manifest to me as if the name had been given. at the next interview, the name will be given no doubt. If I close this negotiation *successfully* I shall be myself the bearer of the Treaty to the U.S. because it may be necessary to make *explanations* which can only be done *personally* , and in pursuance of your permission heretofore given me I shall come.

In the mean time I shall expect instructions of the most clear and explicit character upon the several subjects submitted to the Department of State—vizt. Our claims on the Mexican Govt., The Case of the Ship *Robert Wilson* , that of Doct. Baldwin etc. etc. You know me well enough to be assured that I am not afraid of *responsibility* of which I have more than once given proof since my residence here, but at present I want instructions, with the assurance that *every thing shall be done* which you direct even at the hazard of my Life. If indeed the event should occur to which in the early part of this Letter I

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have alluded, why in such case, much of the instruction asked for and expected will be superseded, because all the Claims *at least will be provided for* , but should that project fail, I must then have something to guide me in the ulterior proceeding.

If the person alluded to in the foregoing part of this letter succeeds as he thinks he can in arranging a treaty on the subject of boundary, we shall proceed and adjust the Articles in six hours, because they will be few and simple, and once I can put them in the right humor, rely on it that but short time will elapse between that of effecting an understanding on the subject and the signing and sealing.

With great respect I am My dear Sir

[P.S.] I shall write you again in a few days.